The Nature of Reality – Paper I

I.   *Plurality or Dynamic Change?*

The time seems to have finally arrived for doing more than merely describing the "errors of our ways" in how we deal with Reality. Even the admission that though errors were involved we effectively "had no choice, and had to do it the way that we did", though still true is, by this time, entirely insufficient.

Having personally spent decades establishing these errors and the results that they finally precipitated in the 20th century, I realise that merely describing the problem is now for me, personally insufficient too. As someone once said "The task in the past has always been to interpret the world, the task now is to change it"

And it is a major task.

We have to modify our most basic assumptions about the Nature of Reality, because these, and the methods predicated upon them, are now THE problem. For we now spend all of our time trying to get round the consequences of our approach, without modifying, or indeed, correcting, what is the source of all our difficulties.

Our greatest inventions, such as mathematics, are now used to weave fantastic webs of speculation like String Theory and Parallel Universe, so that our current false edifices get propped up and continue to grow. They are now extremely precarious, and liable to fall dramatically to the earth.

So, what are these basic errors?

They are the terrible twins – Plurality and Additive Synthesis. We believe that we can always sub divide anything into its component parts, and thereafter explain things by adding them back together to both reconstitute Reality and explain its necessity.

Doesn't sound very dangerous, does it? It doesn't even sound wrong! All around us we see quite definable things which are evidently clearly discernable parts of a larger whole. Our whole system of naming things and classifying them into categories DEPENDS on this. How can this be in question? It IS the basis of our study of Reality.

I am writing these words with my hand. "What on earth could be wrong with a statement like that?", I hear you say . Well, its funny you should ask that question, because my statement is untrue. "But, you have a pen in your hand, and you are putting the pen to paper, and you are making your squiggly lines in rows across the paper, are you not" Well, not really! My hand isn't doing that, I AM! "Don't you mean your thinking brain is directing your hand?" Well, yes and no! We have to consider where the meaning of my squiggly lines came from. Did I invent it solely for my own use? No, I didn't! Now, many other creatures have hands but they don't write. There is a code in those squiggles, which is independent of me, the writer. The code turns the squiggles into "words", which are part of a language – English. I didn't invent that either. It was socially produced by a whole sequence of peoples coming to these islands in waves. English includes elements from the celts, Angles, Saxons, Jutes, Norsemen and French. It also has grown to import words from many other languages, Greek and Latin being the most important. It is perhaps the most mongrel language on the face of this Earth. And, it isn't fixed. It changes all the time. Literally billions of people can understand and use it, with many different versions, and even more dialects. And these vast quantities of people can understand the squiggles in front of me now.

And that isn't the end of the story. The content of what I write is also not a personal invention. It comes from having read hundreds of books, done almost 20 years in Education, and a further 45 years teaching and researching, having five children, 2 marriages, and travelling to many different countries on three continents. All of this is in my writing. That is its true Reality.

Limiting its content to my hand, or my brain, or my invention is simply wrong Even these few words on a piece of paper are packed with real content and even history.

So, why did I think it necessary to deliver this soliloquy?

Our insistence on extracting out sub-sections – parts, is to allow communication primarily, and thereafter to cut down the problem of understanding the world to handlable BITS. It is a practical convenience, and it has delivered wondrous results, but it is a simplification, and can be shown to inevitably lead to error.

From Zeno, with his exposure of Plurality, and his demonstrations of it via his famous Paradoxes around 2,500 years ago, all the way to the wave/particle duality of 20th century Quantum Theory, these methods have led to quite significant errors. Yet, still its criticism has been swept aside, because at the same time, the "division into parts" has been a highly successful method of dealing with most everyday situations.

Now, at this point in the argument, the usual conclusion is to admonish everybody for their "misuse", and direct them to "always remember" that all our conceived of parts are pragmatic approximations, and in need of us constantly reminding ourselves of the dangers of such erroneous assumptions and methods. Very helpful!

But, I'm afraid that people have been preaching in that manner for generations, and it has never really helped. To tell people to abandon their best and most dependable methods because they are at base flawed will never be heeded.

What has got to happen is a profound rethink on the Nature of Reality, and, in particular, its inherent "engine" for Change and Development. After all, Reality produced the present Universe, and within it, Life, from which Mankind arose after millions of stages, and his methods of Science, Literature and Philosophy. Is Reality merely composed of parts into which it can be analysed, then these into further parts, and so on ad infinitum? And when this is done do we merely have to re-constitute each next layer as a means of explanation? That is our Pluralist heritage, but if you want to answer Today's problems, particularly in Science, that Pluralist approach is certainly bound to fail!

So, how can we more correctly conceive of Reality, and how will this new approach change our methods?

The touchstone for beginning this task has to be the problem of Change.

For over 2,500 years our most profound method has been Formal Logic, by means of which a considerable penumbra of consequences could be generated from a small number of premises. It can be used, very effectively, to reveal illogical and false assertions, and has been a bulwark against fantasy and speculation, BUT it is based entirely on Plurality. It also assumed parts, and they are constant, unchanging parts. The Identity relation, A = A is the most basic part of Formal Logic, that is why Logic is ONLY about things that STAY AS THEY ARE. A cannot become B in Formal Logic, and even in everyday reasoning. Such formal assumptions are the GROUND for all debate. But Change is always happening, even though all around us seems constant, it isn't actually true. In the longer term change is noticeable, and sometimes considerable,. Reality is in constant flux, and methods which ON PRINCIPLE ignore this feature will obviously fail. Now, the crucial processes which demonstrate this are Evolution and Emergence. Now, I will not be dismissed by the statement that these are too slow to be of any consequence in the daily lives of anybody, because that isn't what I am using these cases for. It is perhaps NOT evolution that is significant in even your daily lives, but CHANGE is, and I am using Evolution and Emmergence to **establish the principles of change**. No one doubts these amazing developments in Reality, Evolution is Proved, and Life did emerge from inanimate matter. So, it is to these that we must look to reveal the real nature of Reality.

We MUST refine our most basic conceptions and replace them with a dynamic alternative.

Let us begin!

To be continued

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